

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the specification submitted on December 10, 2003, with the substitute specification attached at the end of this Second Preliminary Amendment.

On a new page 17 of the specification, immediately following the claims, please insert the following paragraph:

-- ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to the field of optical-fluorescent markers, particularly to benzopyrrolo-polymethine-based optical-fluorescent markers. --